

Altmire Meets with Local Officials to Advance Allegheny Valley Commuter Rail

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Altmire secured \$500,000 in the FY 2008 budget for study on establishing rail service between Allegheny Valley and downtown Pittsburgh

(Oakmont, PA) – Today, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) presented officials from the Allegheny County Economic Development with \$500,000 that he secured in the FY 2008 federal budget for a study that will lay the groundwork for the Allegheny Valley Commuter Rail. The transit project will provide passenger rail service to connect residents of Westmoreland County and the Allegheny-Kiski Valley with downtown Pittsburgh, and eventually the Pittsburgh International Airport.

As the only congressman from western Pennsylvania serving on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Altmire will be in a prime position to advocate for additional funding for the Allegheny Valley Commuter Rail when Congress reauthorizes the federal highway spending bill next year. The federal highway spending bill – currently known as SAFETEA-LU – lays out the federal government's transportation spending priorities for the next five years and is the single biggest source of funding for transportation projects nationwide.

“With record gas prices and increased congestion along Route 28, western Pennsylvania needs to direct more resources toward developing mass transit and in particular the Allegheny Valley Commuter Rail,” Altmire said. “The planning study we are talking about today is a step forward in getting the Allegheny Valley Commuter Rail up and running. As the only western Pennsylvanian on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am going to work to ensure our region's transportation initiatives take high priority in the reauthorization of the federal highway bill next year so we can secure the funding needed to keep moving these projects forward.”

To speed up the commuter rail's development, local officials are currently focusing on establishing a “Starter System” that will provide passenger rail service between the Allegheny Valley and downtown Pittsburgh along existing Allegheny Valley railroad right-of-ways. The project is estimated to cost \$131 million and will average 1,900 riders each weekday.